

Remarks

In the Final Office Action of August 23, 2006, the Examiner allowed claims 11-13 and indicated claims 4 and 6 are directed to allowable subject matter. Additionally, the Examiner objected to the Abstract; rejected claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112; and rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on U.S. Patent No. 6,643,524 to Ishii et al. ("Ishii") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,598,402 to Mizusawa et al. ("Mizusawa").

By this Amendment, Applicant proposes amending the Abstract. Applicant submits that, in view of these amendments, the objection to the Abstract should be withdrawn.

Additionally, by this Amendment, Applicant proposes amending claims 1, 6 and 10, and canceling claims 4 and 8 without prejudice or disclaimer. More specifically, Applicant proposes amending claims 1 and 6 to substantially incorporate the features of the now-canceled claims 4 and 8, respectively. Applicant also proposes amending claim 10 to change its dependency from claim 8 to claim 6.

Regarding the rejection of claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Applicant submits that the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn in view of the proposed amendments to claim 1.

Regarding the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicant submits that all of the proposed amended claims include subject matter indicated by the

Examiner as allowable. Accordingly, this rejection is obviated and should be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 1-3, 5-7, and 9-13 in condition for allowance. Applicant submits that the entry of this Amendment would not require any further search by the Examiner since the claimed subject-matter was indicated by the Examiner as being allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1070 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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Attachment: Abstract